

City of Mountain View • Planning Division

Design Guidelines for Single Family Homes



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Section I

Introduction

Background and Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The City of Mountain View is a community that consists of many individual neighborhoods. The special character of each neighborhood should be protected and enriched as it changes. Communities and individual buildings may be pressured to change in response to economic conditions, life styles, and homeowner needs. These Design Guidelines will help to assure that necessary changes enhance the desirable qualities of each neighborhood.

Trends in Housing Remodeling

From the 1950's through the mid - 1980's, the predominant trend in single family home additions were fairly minor one story additions, often at the back of the house. There were some two story additions, but they tended to be the exception rather than the rule.

Since the 1980's, there are increasing examples of large second story additions, often built to the maximum square footage allowed by code. This may be due to the great rise in land values in recent years. These homes are often very different in character and scale from the surrounding neighborhood.

Protection for Neighboring Properties

Second story construction is likely to continue since most of Mountain View's residential neighborhoods consist of single story houses. Guidelines regarding

these additions and alterations are very important for maintaining existing neighborhood character. Added height and bulk can cause privacy problems for adjacent homes. Newly enlarged homes may not be compatible with the patterns found in the neighborhood. The Design Guidelines will suggest ways that additions may be built while maintaining privacy and ensuring neighborhood compatibility.

Use of the Design Guidelines

It is important to note that the Guidelines should be used after referring to the Zoning Code to determine the legal limits of building. The Zoning Code governs height and setbacks for all lots in the City. Within the Zoning limits, however, there are many possible ways to add to or alter a house. The Guidelines will suggest ways that additions can be done compatibly.

The Design Guidelines are intended to be used in several different ways:

A Guide for Homeowners

Use of the Guidelines will help all homeowners become familiar with design ideas which will enable an addition to be considerate of its surroundings and contribute to the neighborhood.

A Basis for Reviewing Bonus FAR Requests and Other Exceptions to the Zoning Code

In 1991, the Planning Department conducted an R1 Neighborhood Zoning Study to identify areas of concern within the current Zoning Code. One of the

primary concerns regarded the allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The allowable FAR limits the square footage of each house to a percentage of the total lot area. Some homeowners felt the allowable FAR was too strict, not allowing a large enough addition when the lot was small. Others, on bigger lots, felt their privacy was being invaded by large additions to their neighbor's houses and suggested lowering the allowable FAR.

In response to these concerns, the City established a sliding scale for allowable FAR based on lot size. All lots are allowed a base FAR with the possibility of bonus FAR if the homeowner goes through an additional design review process. These Design Guidelines will be used to evaluate requests for bonus FAR or for exceptions to the Zoning Code. Design Guidelines were found to be the only way to allow flexibility in expanding houses while protecting neighborhood character and privacy.

Design Review of Additions on Substandard Lots

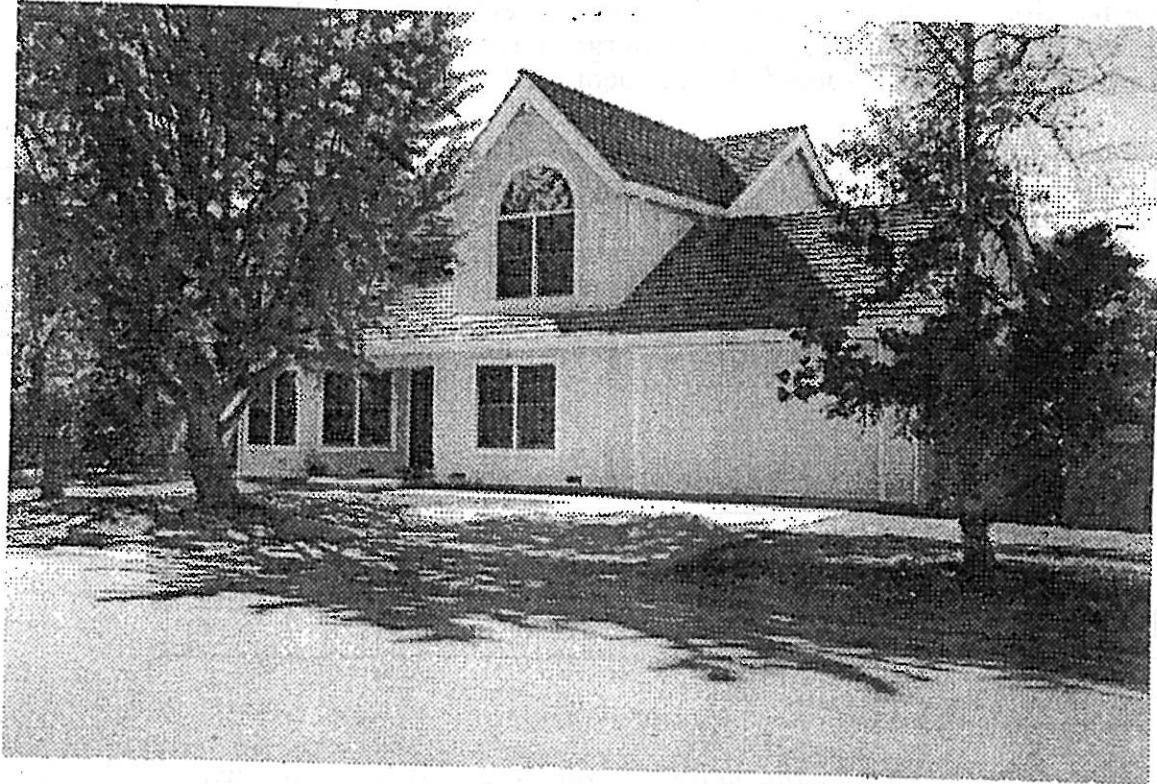
Special care must be taken in planning additions on very small lots. Maintaining privacy and neighborhood character is more difficult when houses are close together. Because of the importance of good planning in these sensitive area, the City requires a design review process for all projects on lots which are less than 5000 square feet or less than 40' wide. These Guidelines will be used to evaluate projects on those lots.

Design Review of Additions in the Old Downtown Neighborhood

Projects planned for lots in the Downtown neighborhood will also use these Design Guidelines. Since the Old Downtown Neighborhood has a distinct and desirable character, any proposed projects will be reviewed for compatibility with their neighborhood.

Section II

Guidelines for Good Design



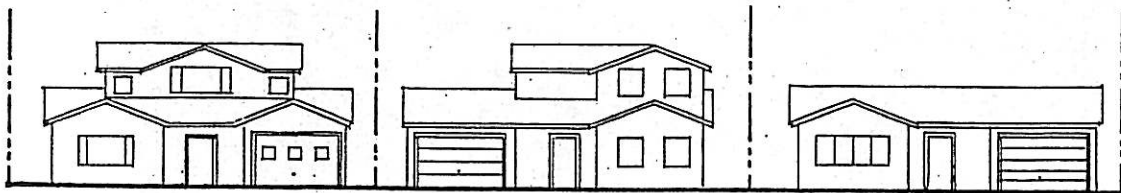
This section, Guidelines for Good Design, is a general guide that can be used for all additions or alterations of single family homes. The guidelines found in this section apply whether the project is requesting a bonus to the base allowable Floor Area Ratio, is in the Downtown neighborhood, or is on a Small Lot.

The Guidelines are organized to address the larger context of the overall neighborhood first, then discuss the relationships with the immediately adjacent homes, and finally, list the elements of house design.

A. NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

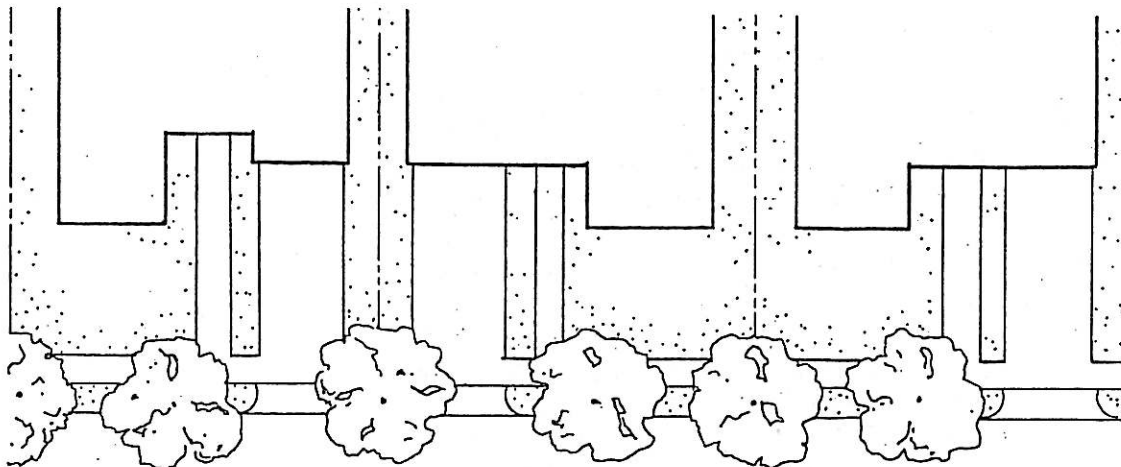
Observable architectural patterns help to establish the character of a neighborhood. Patterns of setbacks, building height, entry expression and location, street trees, and garage location all combine to give an overall impression of any neighborhood. These patterns can be well established, as in older, mature neighborhoods. If there are strong patterns, it is important to maintain the character of the neighborhood by respecting these patterns. Some patterns, such as location of entrances or street trees, can be promoted when a newer neighborhood undergoes individual changes. The patterns described in these Guidelines should also be incorporated into any new subdivisions.

Neighborhood patterns are those which are visible from the street. Everything in the front yard - planting, fences, trees, entry porches and paths, the driveway - contributes to the streetscape. By keeping planting and fences low in the front yard, by planting trees and orienting the entrance of the house toward the street, a sense of community is encouraged. While maintaining privacy is important, a neighborhood of accessible, friendly, and inviting front yards promotes involvement and affords a degree of safety.



Elevation

Each of these houses respects the neighborhood patterns - by following setbacks, maintaining street trees, and by orienting the entry to the street.



Plan

A. NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

1. LANDSCAPE THE FRONT YARD

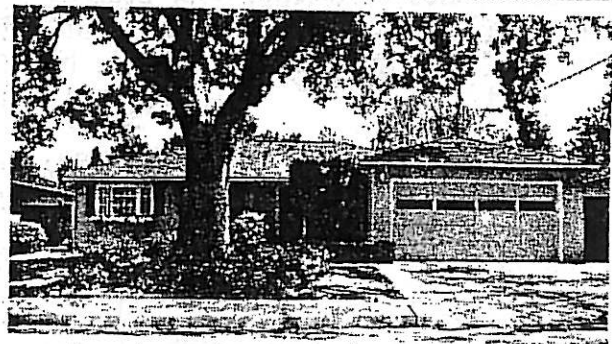
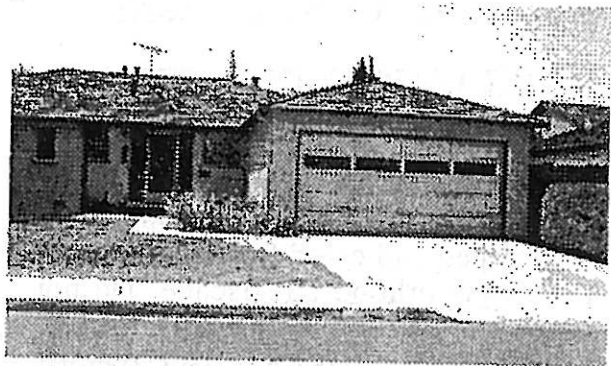
The front yard offers an opportunity to create a very pleasant environment for everyone - property owners to passers-by. Provide landscaping in the front yard. Low plantings, flowers, even a vegetable garden are desirable in Mountain View's warm climate. Drought tolerant species should be considered for all plantings.

2. MAINTAIN EXISTING AND ESTABLISH NEW STREET TREES

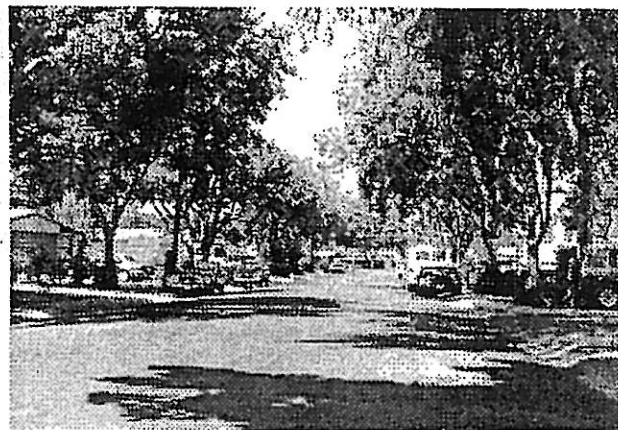
All homeowners should add to the community wealth of street trees. They beautify the street with foliage and color, provide shade, and improve air quality. Street trees can also enhance property values.

Any second story additions will require the planting of a new street tree unless there are existing street trees that are healthy and appropriately placed. Use the designated street tree for your street, if there is one (check with the Department of Public Works). Fill in gaps in an established tree pattern or begin a new pattern to enhance the neighborhood.

Watering and maintaining the health of existing and new trees is the responsibility of the homeowner. Each street tree needs an open space around its base free of paving. This is to allow water and other nutrients a path to the roots and prevents compaction of the roots by any vehicle traffic.



Landscaping and street trees present a more pleasing front yard.



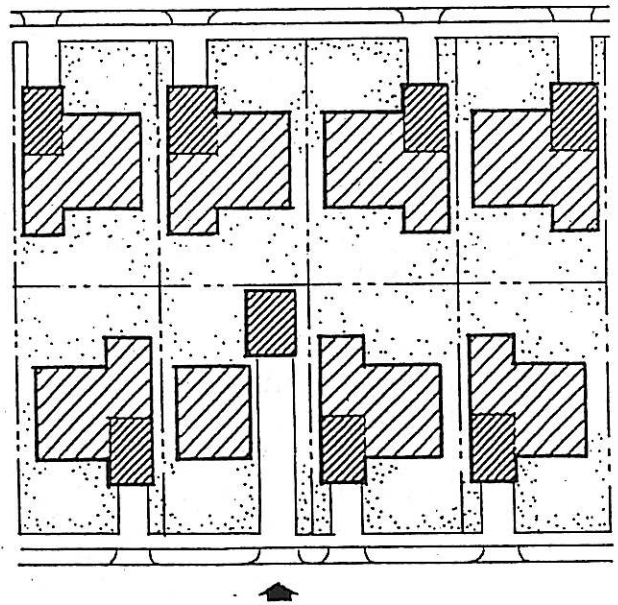
A. NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

3. MAINTAIN PLANTING STRIPS

The maintenance of the planting strip between the curb and the sidewalk, if there is one, is the responsibility of the property owner. This area should be landscaped and cared for as it is part of the neighborhood streetscape. Do not replace a planting strip with concrete. Loose stones or bricks, over zealous shrubbery, and low tree limbs could invite accidents and should be avoided.

4. FOLLOW THE NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN OF GARAGE LOCATIONS

The location of the garage should follow the prevalent pattern in the neighborhood. A new garage which doesn't follow this pattern may be out of character with the neighborhood. If the neighborhood has attached garages at the side of the house, placing a new garage in the rear may disrupt the pattern of quiet backyards. A garage placed on the front of the house where the neighborhood pattern is one of rear detached garages will change the character of the neighborhood.



This garage doesn't follow the neighborhood pattern.

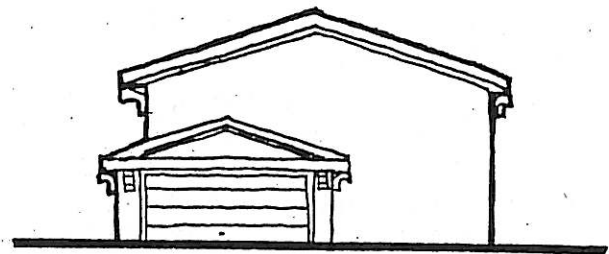
A. NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

5. REDUCE THE PROMINENCE OF GARAGES

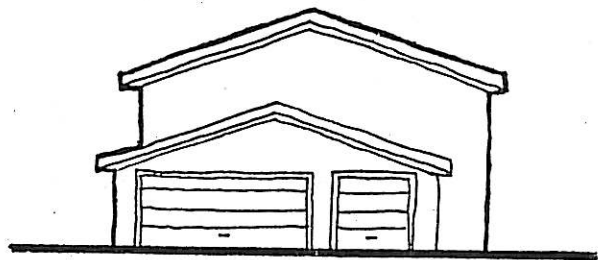
Three car garages are not encouraged on lot frontages less than 65' long. A three car garage will overwhelm the front of a lot that is narrower than 65', giving too much emphasis to the automobile. Don't let the garage overwhelm the house and wall it off from the neighborhood.

Detailing of garage doors can visually reduce the apparent mass. Using a central post and two doors instead of one double wide door, placing windows in the doors, and adding detail which is similar to the amount and scale of detail of the house can reduce the impact of a blank garage facade.

The style of the garage should be consistent with or complimentary to the architectural style and detailing of the house. This includes the type of materials and quality of finish.



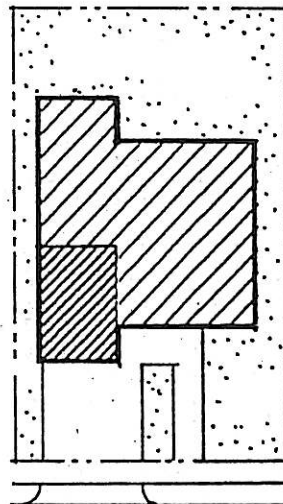
Two car garage



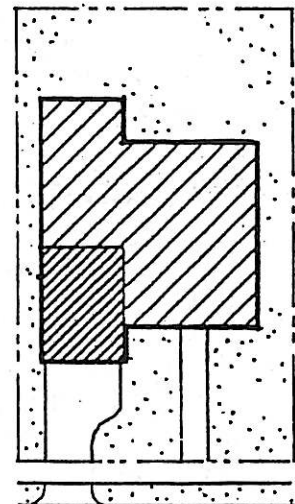
Three car garage overwhelms the front of the house

6. MINIMIZE DRIVEWAYS AND CURBCUTS

Paving in the front yard, by Code, is limited to 50% of the front yard area. However, designing driveways to minimize the amount of paving and maximize the amount of landscaping in the front yards is preferred. The driveway may widen as it approaches the garage to accommodate entrance to the garage. Plan the location of the curbcut and driveway to avoid any existing street trees.



Avoid



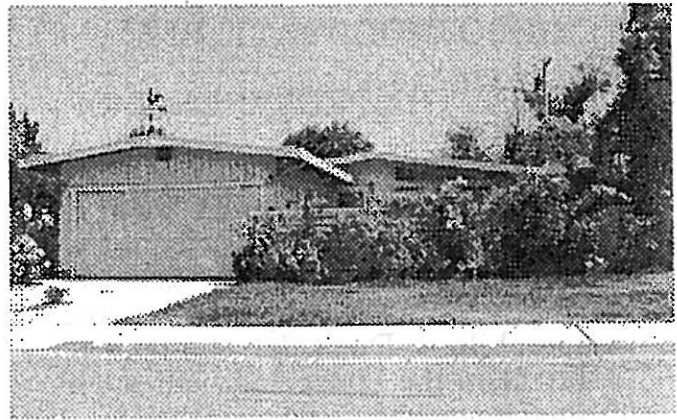
Preferred

A. NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

7. ENTRY LOCATION SHOULD BE VISIBLE FROM THE STREET

To encourage neighborly associations, front doors, front porches, and front walks should face the public right of way and be visible from the street.

Front fences and hedges can be used to define the homes entrance. Use gates, trellis with climbing vines, or hedges with openings to express this "welcome". Front hedges and fences can be important elements for security and privacy though they should not act as barricades.



Though attractive, this wall hides the front of the house. -



A low fence defines the yard, yet maintains an open, neighborly character.

8. RESPECT THE FRONT AND REAR SETBACK PATTERNS ON THE BLOCK

The minimum front, side and rear setbacks are established by the Zoning Code. If there is a strong pattern of setbacks in the neighborhood that is different from the Zoning Code, that pattern should be respected. A building that doesn't follow an established setback pattern may be disruptive to the character of the neighborhood. Follow the prevalent pattern of setbacks to help unify the neighborhood.

B. RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORS

The character of a neighborhood comes from the large scale patterns of house location, landscaping, and garage location. This character is also influenced by the more localized relationships of one house to its adjacent neighbors. Most neighborhoods were originally built as single story developments. As homeowners enlarge their properties, the scale of the buildings change relative to their neighbors. Sensitive design can minimize the impact created by new construction, while maintaining acoustic and visual privacy between homes.

While the overall impression of a neighborhood is all that those passing through sense, the relationship to immediate neighbors may be more important to those who live in the neighborhood. In planning an addition or alteration, it is a good idea to discuss your plans with the neighbors who will be most affected by the new construction.

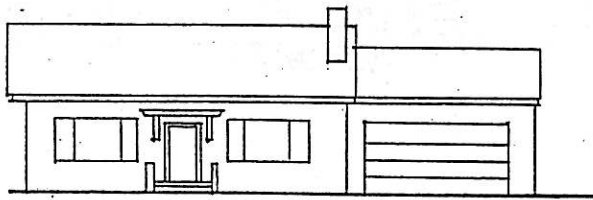


The two story addition relates to its neighbors in a considerate manner - maintaining privacy and a neighborhood scale.

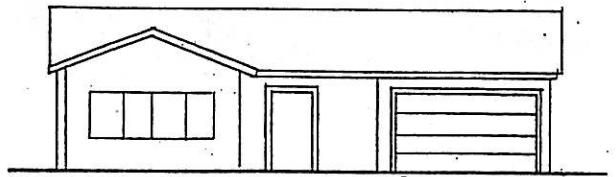
B. RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORS

1. SECOND STORY ADDITIONS SHOULD GENERALLY BE STEPPED BACK FROM THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

In most cases, it is preferable to add to a house on the first floor. If that is not possible, an additional story may have to be built. A second story addition that is stepped back from the front of the building makes the house appear smaller from the street. The distance set back should be significant, not just 1' or 2'. It is often desirable to build a second story "within" the overall roof form and have dormers or bay projections. These reductions in scale and height help a second story addition fit the neighborhood scale in a single story neighborhood.



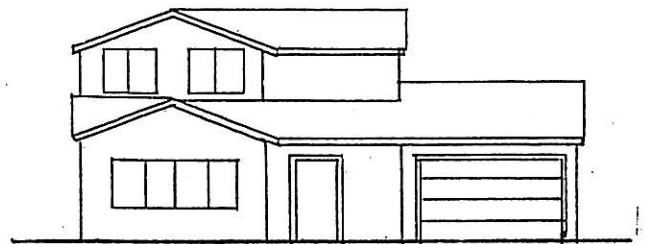
Original House



Original House



House with the second story built "within" the overall roof form.

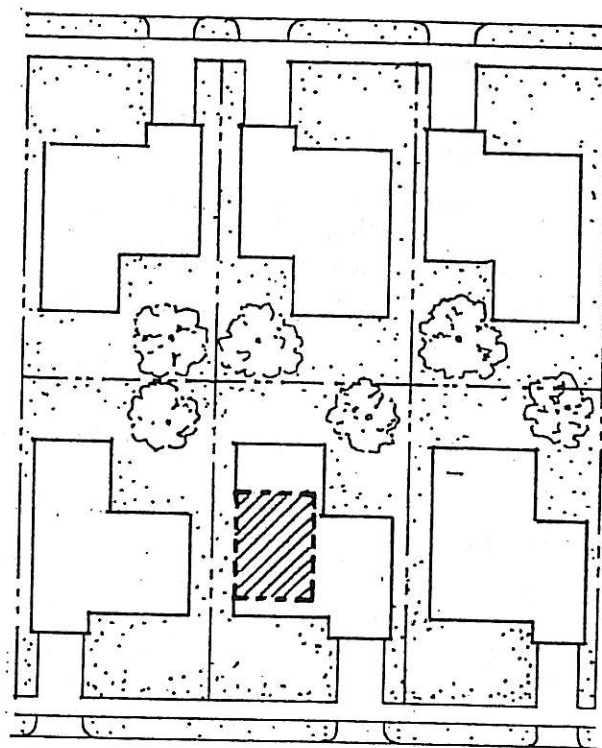


House with the second story addition stepped back.

B. RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORS

2. SECOND STORY ADDITIONS SHOULD GENERALLY BE STEPPED BACK FROM THE REAR AND SIDES OF THE HOUSE

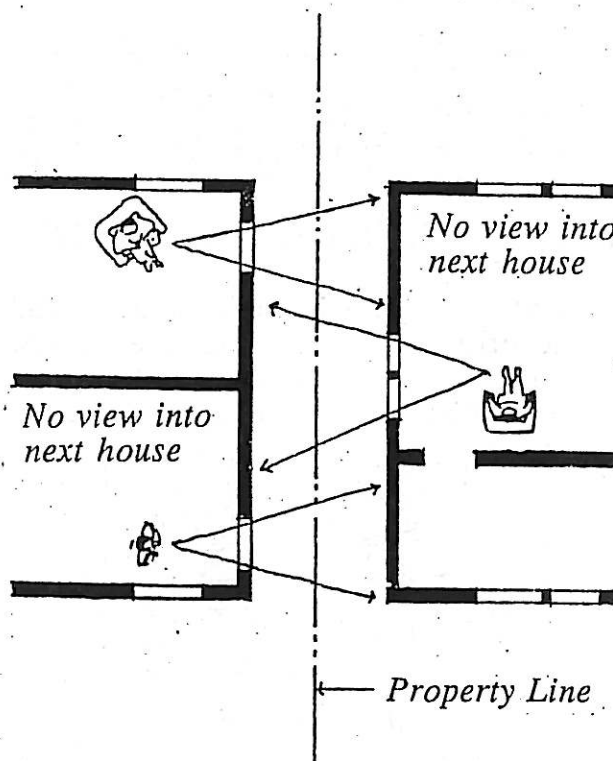
As building height increases, space between buildings must increase. The Planning Department requires certain minimum setbacks at the side and rear yards. There is flexibility, however, in where a second story may be placed depending on the size of the addition and the layout of the first floor. Avoid long, flat two story walls along the entire side of the house. Any new addition should be placed to maximize privacy between houses and to provide light and air for all neighbors. Respond to neighboring conditions on all sides.



Second story stepped back from rear and sides

3. STAGGER LOCATION OF WINDOWS AND BALCONIES

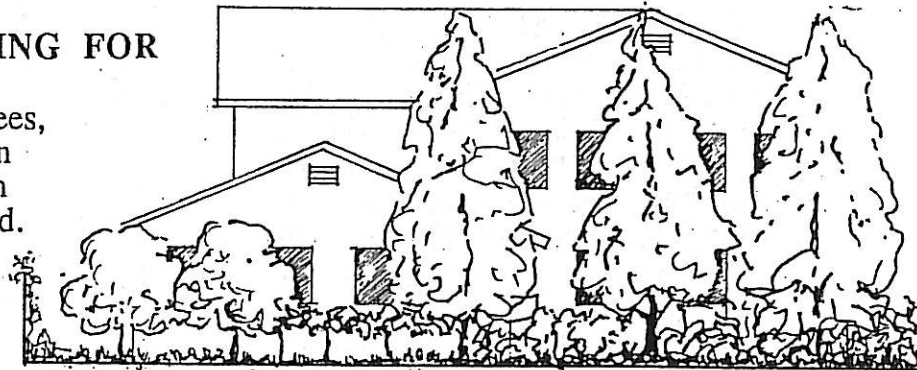
With respect to a neighbor, stagger or alternate windows to prevent looking straight down into a back yard or straight across into a neighboring room. Balconies and decks can be constructed to minimize their intrusion by building them "interlocked" with their adjacent rooms.



B. RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORS

4. PROVIDE LANDSCAPING FOR PRIVACY

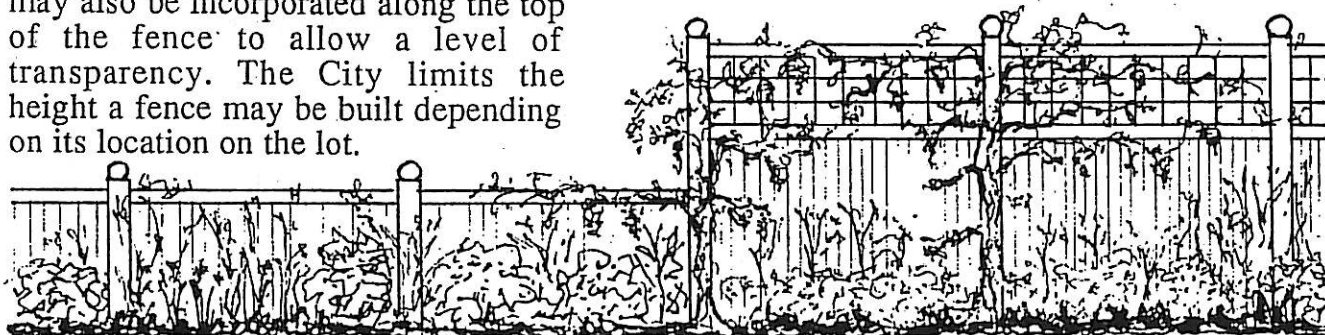
Appropriate placement of trees, hedges and other foliage can screen and block views from your yard and into your yard.



Provide rear yard landscaping for privacy.

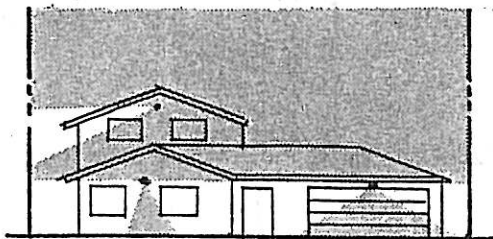
5. PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE FENCE WHERE PRIVACY IS DESIRED

A back or side yard fence can offer privacy and security. Planting along the base of a fence with climbing, flowering vines will soften the edge while maintaining security. A trellis may also be incorporated along the top of the fence to allow a level of transparency. The City limits the height a fence may be built depending on its location on the lot.

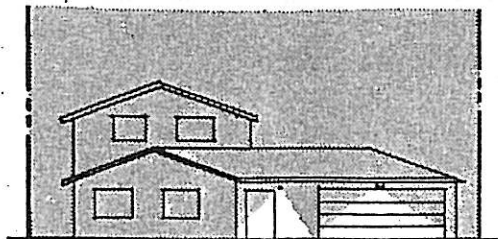


6. USE EXTERIOR LIGHTING CAREFULLY

Outdoor lighting provides safety and security for areas around a house. Arrange any exterior lighting to illuminate only your own property.



Do not light neighbor's property



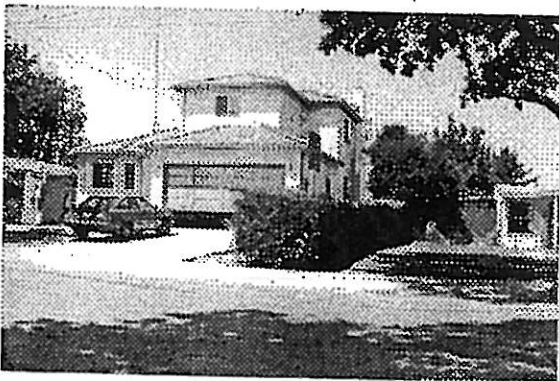
Light only your own property.

C. ELEMENTS OF HOUSE DESIGN

After larger context neighborhood patterns and relationships to immediate neighbors have been considered, the design of the actual addition as it relates to the existing house deserves attention. Any addition should be integrated with the existing house so that it appears to have always existed. The shape and proportions, overall massing, roof slope, architectural details, even the types of windows will contribute to the success of an addition or alteration.

Below are several examples of successful second story additions. All seek an harmonious balance of forms, respect particular neighborhood patterns, and contribute to their streetscapes. Each has tried to minimize its impact on neighboring houses.

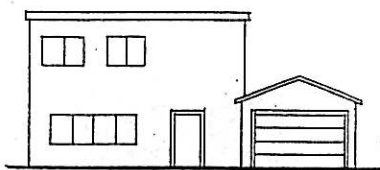
The guidelines found in this section address issues specific to the individual house.



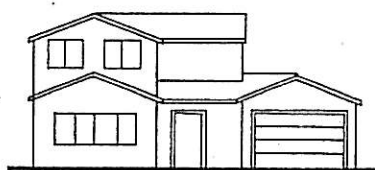
C. ELEMENTS OF HOUSE DESIGN

1. KEEP THE OVERALL SHAPE OF THE HOUSE SIMPLE AND ELEGANT

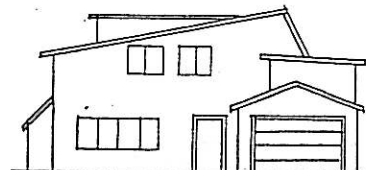
The form of any new addition should be compatible with the existing house form. Too many bays, bumps, and roof changes may result in a chaotic mix. On the other hand, an addition that is too boxy and bulky is also not appropriate. The addition should be designed to be compatible with the size, scale, and proportion of the existing house.



Too boxy



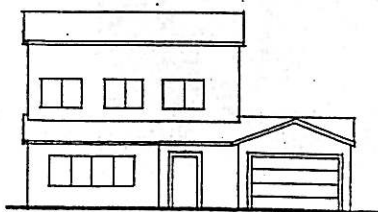
Preferred



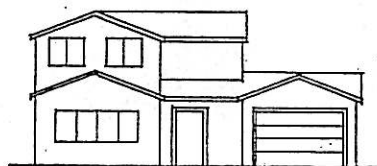
Too chaotic

2. PROPORTION ANY SECOND STORY TO HARMONIZE WITH THE EXISTING PORTION OF THE HOUSE

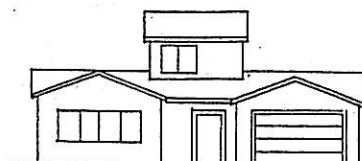
An addition that is too tall relative to the first floor will look top heavy and unpleasant. If a second story addition is too small, it may stand out as an afterthought, not integrated with the lower part of the house. An addition should appear as if it has always been part of the house.



Top heavy



Preferred

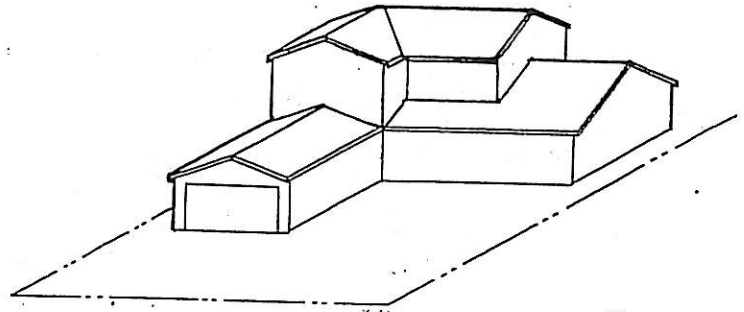


Second story too small

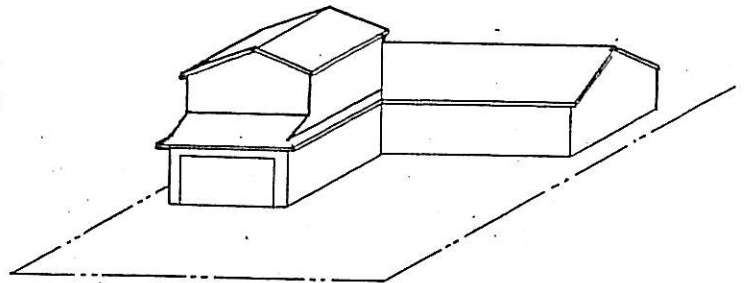
C. ELEMENTS OF HOUSE DESIGN

3. LOCATE ADDITIONS OVER THE HOUSE, NOT OVER THE GARAGE

If at all possible, additions and renovations on the ground floor should be considered. If you must go up, build over the existing house, not over the garage. Adding a second story over the garage puts too much bulk at the front of the house and creates an unbalanced appearance. Enlarging the volume of the house puts more emphasis upon it and the garage becomes visually secondary. It may be appropriate to build some or all of a second story addition over the garage if the garage is set back from the front of the house. If the garage exists in front of the house, any second story addition must be set back at least 5 feet from the front of the garage. Remove all of the existing roof if a second story aligns with the first floor walls. Do not leave a "skirt" of roof.



Add over the house.



Do not add only over the garage.

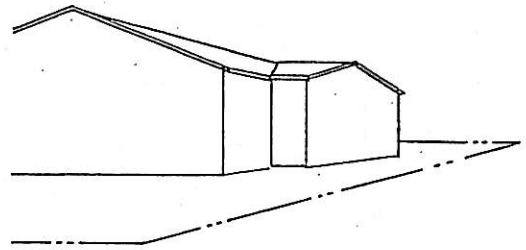
4. EITHER LINE UP THE SECOND STORY WALL WITH THE FIRST STORY WALL, OR OFFSET THEM SIGNIFICANTLY

Within the Zoning Code, there are many ways to add a second story. There are front, side, and rear yard setback requirements that must be followed. When a second story is planned, however, there are situations allowed in the code which would result in a 1' or 2' offset between the first and second story. Avoid this situation! The exterior walls of a second story should be lined up with the first floor walls or should be offset a significant amount, say 5'. Too small an offset is awkward and can look unbalanced. A second story should be integrated with the first story.

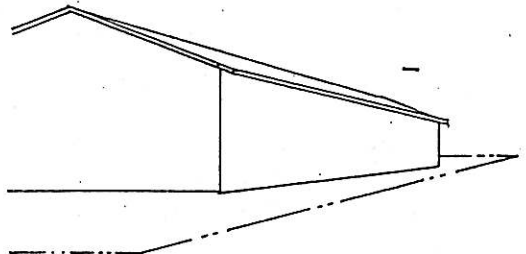
C. ELEMENTS OF HOUSE DESIGN

5. AVOID THE CREATION OF A LONG BLANK SIDE WALL

Minimize the length of any flat two story wall. A side wall 12 feet or less may be without windows or other projections. Side walls longer than about 12 feet should provide windows or other building articulation. The location of walls is limited by the Zoning Code.



Preferred



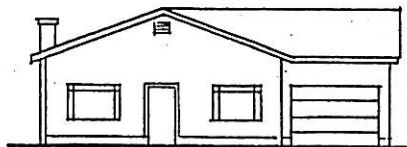
Avoid long blank side walls.

6. NEW ROOF SLOPES SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE

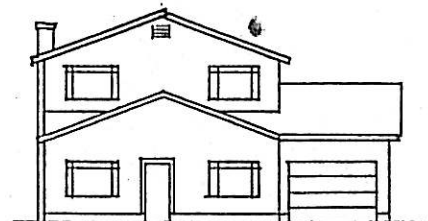
New roof slopes should be consistent or compatible with existing roof slopes. The roof is one of the most important elements contributing to a sense of scale and proportion of the building and so should be harmonious. Too many different roof angles or roof types create a disjointed and chaotic appearance.



Avoid - Roof does not follow existing roof slopes



Existing House



Better - New roof slope is compatible with existing roof.

C. ELEMENTS OF HOUSE DESIGN

7. NEW WINDOWS SHOULD BE COMPLIMENTARY

Window type, amount of glazing, position on the facade, and trim detail should be complimentary to the existing windows. For instance, don't use aluminum sliding windows in a house that has wood double hung windows.

8. MATERIALS AND FINISHES SHOULD BE OF GOOD QUALITY

Materials and finishes of an addition or alteration should be consistent and continuous with the original house. New materials should be at least as good, if not better, as the original finish materials. If the existing house offers little in the way of interest the addition should seek to improve the quality and appearance of the house while remaining compatible.

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Section III

Floor Area Ratio Bonus

What is a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Bonus?

Mountain View's Zoning Code for single-family homes limits the square footage of each home based on the size of the lot. The total square footage of a building includes accessory structures such as garages and sheds as well as the house itself. Floor area ratio (FAR) limits are intended to regulate the mass or bulk of homes to make sure that they do not become overly large relative to the size of their lots and relative to other homes in the neighborhood.

While a FAR limit is considered a good general tool for community planning, it does not ensure neighborhood compatibility or good design. An obvious visual difference exists between homes of .30 FAR and .60 FAR but the difference between .35, .40, and .45 FAR is not necessarily discernible. Even a larger house can fit in well with the neighborhood if it is designed well.

Because it is difficult to set a single FAR requirement for all lots in the City, the Planning Department has adopted a sliding scale allowable FAR based on the lot size. No design review is required if the proposed addition or alteration is within the allowable base FAR. If a homeowner wants a larger home than is allowed by the base FAR, they must go through a design review process to ensure that the proposed addition will be compatible with existing neighbors and neighborhood character. If, through good siting and design, the proposed house does not appear overly large or incompatible with the neighborhood, a bonus to the base FAR may be granted.

How is a Bonus for FAR granted?

To be granted a bonus to the base FAR, the homeowner must go through a design review process with the SPAR (Site Planning and Architectural Review) committee and the Zoning Administrator. The Planning Department will notify neighbors within 300' of a project requesting bonus FAR or an exception to the Zoning Code. The homeowner is encouraged to informally review proposed projects with neighbors before submitting final drawings to the City. The homeowner is also strongly encouraged to have a pre-submittal review meeting with Planning staff to get constructive feedback before final drawings are turned in to the City. Comments from staff will help a homeowner complete the permit process more easily.

A request for FAR bonus will be evaluated based on its relationship to its neighborhood. It should be compatible with existing neighborhood character. The proposed project should not be intrusive to the privacy or sunlight access of neighboring homes. It should be designed to minimize the perceived size of the house. The project should also be of superior design quality.

These Residential Design Guidelines will be used as the basis for reviewing for an exception to base FAR limit or for exceptions to the Zoning Code. All of the Guidelines for Good Design (Section II) apply to any project which is requesting a bonus FAR or Code exception. A homeowner should review these to ensure compatibility before proceeding with the required reviews by the City.

It is important to note that a homeowner is not necessarily entitled to the maximum FAR bonus. The amount of bonus granted depends on extent of neighborhood compatibility and design integrity.

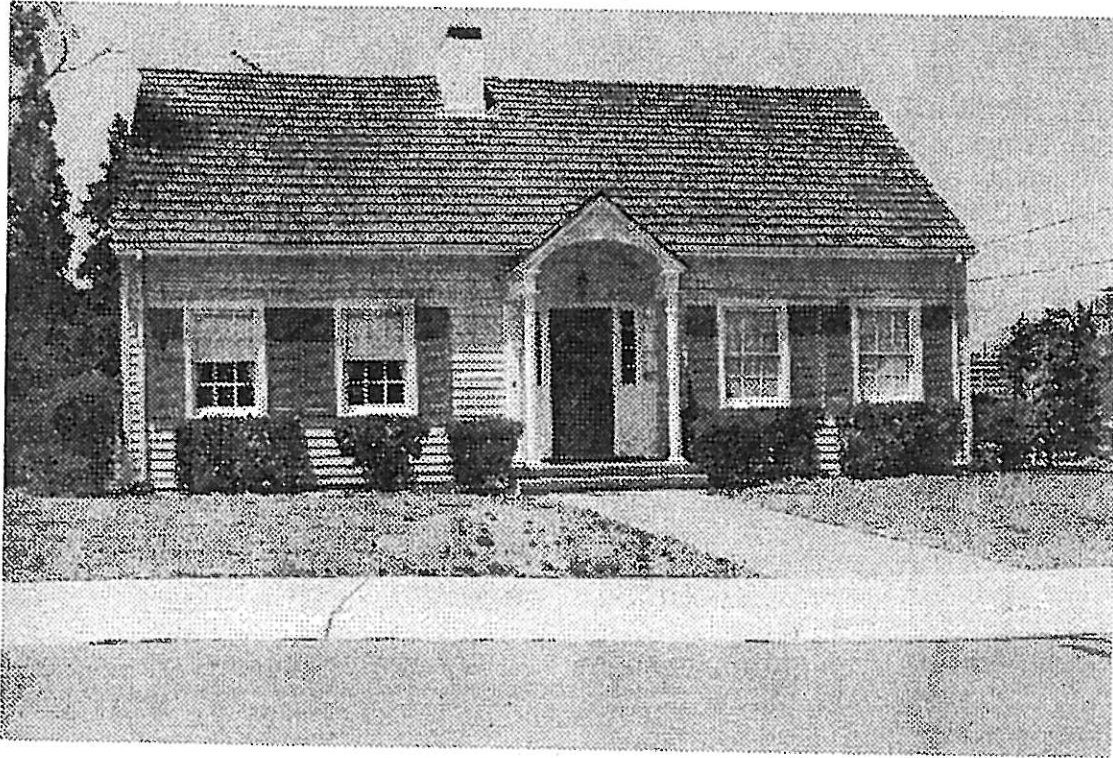
On small or substandard lots, bonus FAR may be granted following a design review process. Guidelines for Good Design and Guidelines for Small Lots will be used to evaluate projects requesting bonus FAR.

In the Old Downtown neighborhood, any requests for bonus FAR will be reviewed using the Guidelines for the Downtown neighborhood as well as the Guidelines for Good Design.

This review process will help a homeowner, through design and site planning, minimize the perceived bulk of a house and its impact on neighbors and ensure a fit with the neighborhood.

Section IV

Guidelines for the Downtown Neighborhood



This section is intended to be used by those planning additions or alterations to homes in the Downtown neighborhood. The Downtown neighborhood is one of the older neighborhoods in the City. Planned when cars were used for only special trips, not every trip, its streets are pleasant for strolling and its houses are oriented to the street with front porches and big windows. Front doors and porches reflect the fact that the connection to the rest of the community was through the front door, not the garage. Large amounts of landscaping in the front yards and narrow driveways leading to detached rear garages are typical.

Abundant street trees are spaced closely together. Many streets have just one type of street tree to further define the character of that street. Houses have elaborate detailing and trim. These characteristics foster a neighborly quality that is important to recognize. The following Guidelines address issues which are specific to the Downtown neighborhood. They should be used in conjunction with the Guidelines for Good Design to help enhance and strengthen the unique character of the Downtown neighborhood.

Other neighborhoods may develop design guidelines specific to their neighborhood after a comprehensive neighborhood planning program.

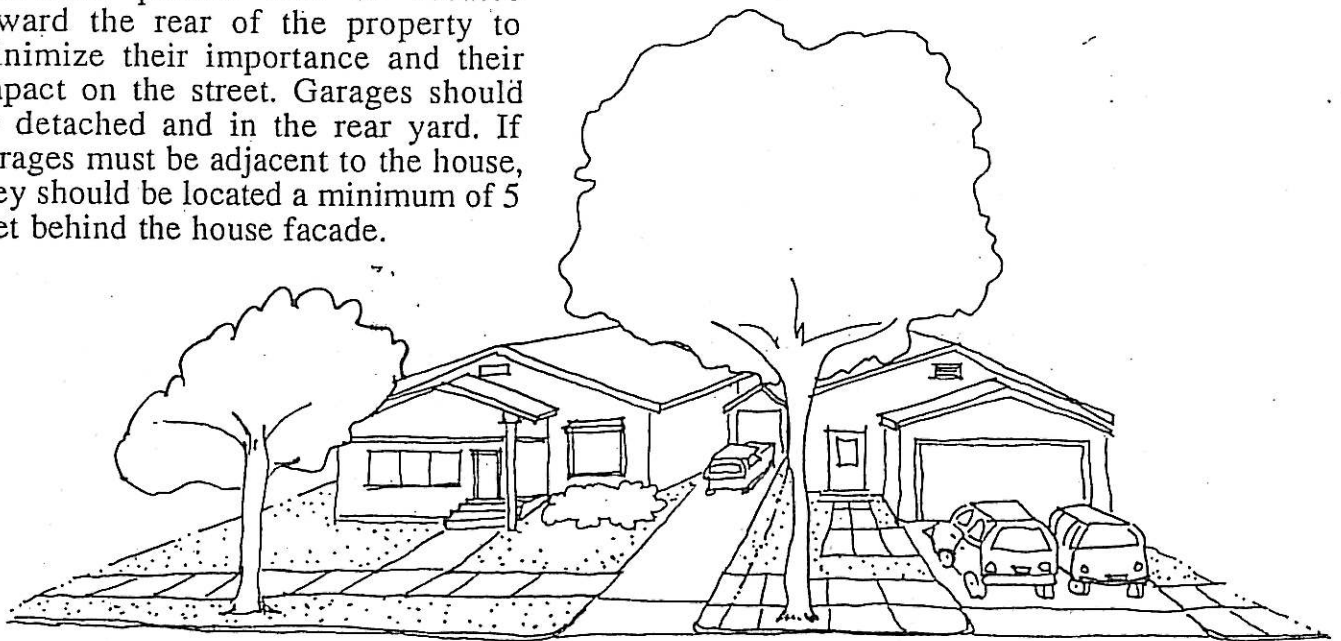
GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

1. MAXIMIZE FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING AND MINIMIZE PAVEMENT

Landscaped front yards should be more prominent than driveways. Lots must not become parking lots with a large portion of the lot frontage devoted to the driveway. Double width driveways are not appropriate unless lots are very wide or are corner lots. Maximize front yard landscaping and maintain planting strips with landscaping to enhance the well planted character of the Old Downtown neighborhood. Always consider drought tolerant plantings for landscaping.

2. LOCATE THE GARAGE BEHIND THE HOUSE

Houses are more prominent than garages. Garages should follow the prevalent pattern and be located toward the rear of the property to minimize their importance and their impact on the street. Garages should be detached and in the rear yard. If garages must be adjacent to the house, they should be located a minimum of 5 feet behind the house facade.



Curbside planting strip with grass and single car driveway

Two car driveways and garages overwhelm the sidewalk (not allowed)

GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

3. ORIENT THE HOUSE TO THE STREET

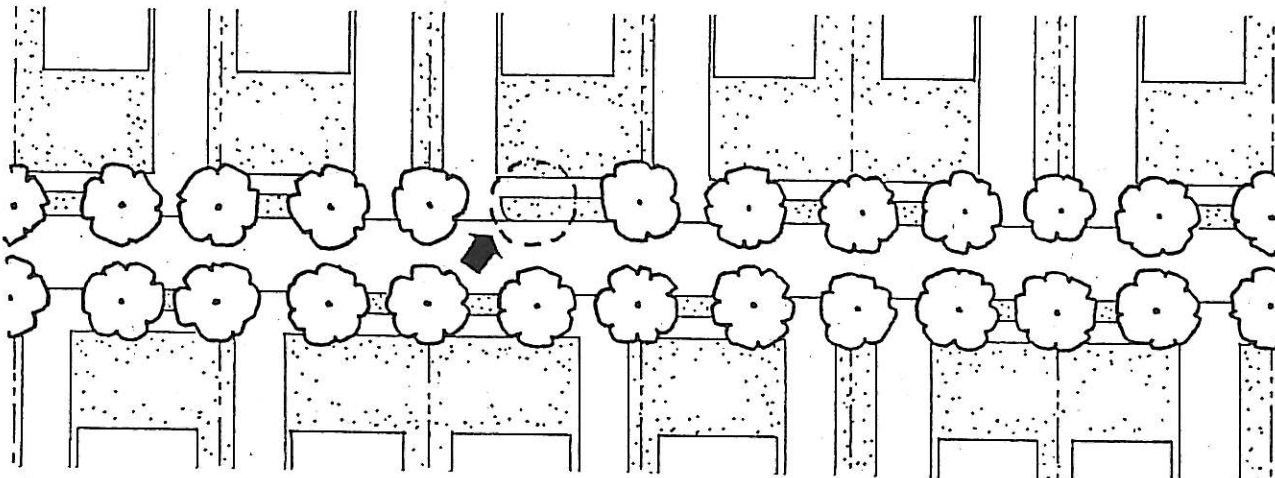
The neighborhood has an existing pattern of front doors, front porches, front walks, front picture windows, and lush landscaping. All these elements indicate the importance of the front entry. Any new construction should maintain these elements or introduce them, continuing the inviting and neighborly quality. An entry walk should directly connect the sidewalk to the front door.



Orient the house to the street.

4. MAINTAIN PLANTER STRIPS AND STREET TREES

Street trees and planter strips are desirable in any neighborhood, but are particularly important to the Old Downtown neighborhood. Many Downtown neighborhood streets have a single type of street tree, regularly spaced. It is important to maintain and encourage the character these trees add to the street. Fill in gaps with trees appropriate to the neighborhood (consult the Department of Public Works).

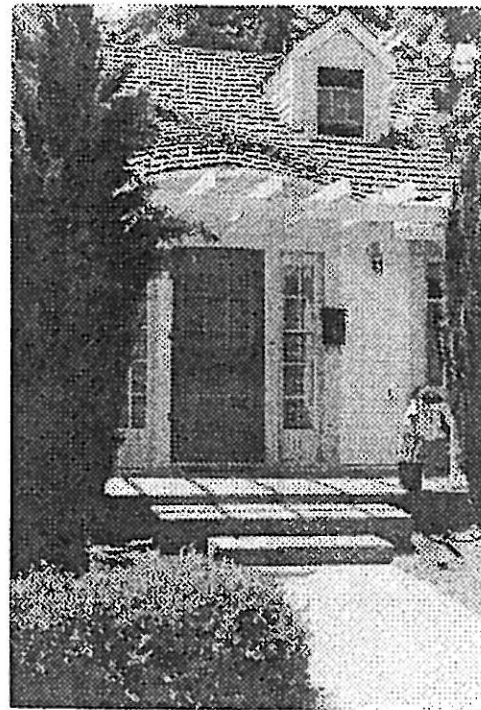
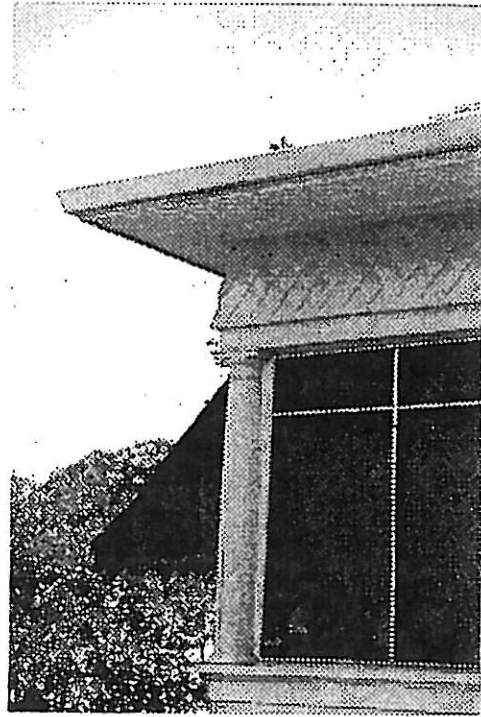


Complete the street tree pattern where gaps exist

GUIDELINES FOR THE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

5. CONTRIBUTE TO THE QUALITY OF ARCHITECTURAL TRIM AND DETAILING

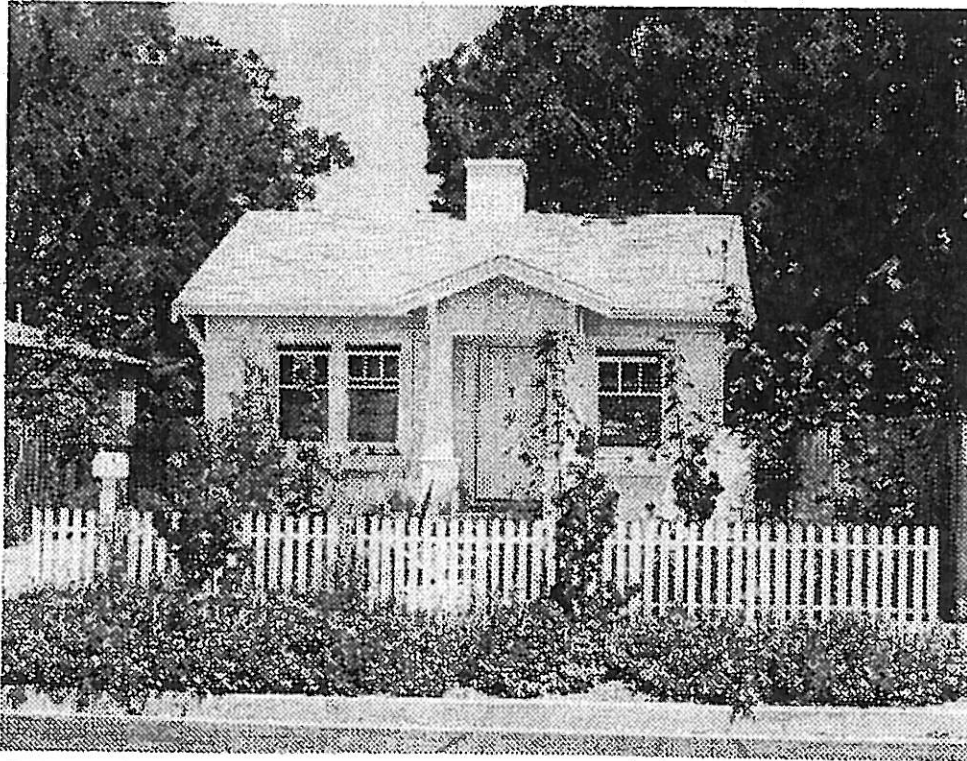
Generally the older homes exhibit more elaborate and interesting trim and detailing. Whenever possible and wherever appropriate trim and details similar to the existing house should be used. It is important that an addition or renovation keep in character with the existing home and neighborhood



Architectural detailing in the Old Downtown neighborhood

Section V

Guidelines for Small Lots



Lot sizes in Mountain View vary from as small as 3750 square feet to as large as 20,000 square feet or more. Lots that are less than 5000 square feet or less than 40' wide are considered Small Lots and have special design considerations in planning an addition or alteration.

Mountain View has several unique neighborhoods of small cottages built in the 1940s. Lot widths are often very small resulting in homes which are narrow and deep. Constraints of size make additions and improvements difficult. The following Guidelines discuss the issues unique to the Small Lot neighborhoods.

Any new house or addition built on a small lot must go through the design review process. These Guidelines will be used as a basis for review of proposed projects.

All of the Guidelines for Good Design should also be used in planning an addition. Issues of privacy and front yard paving are that much more critical on Small Lots.

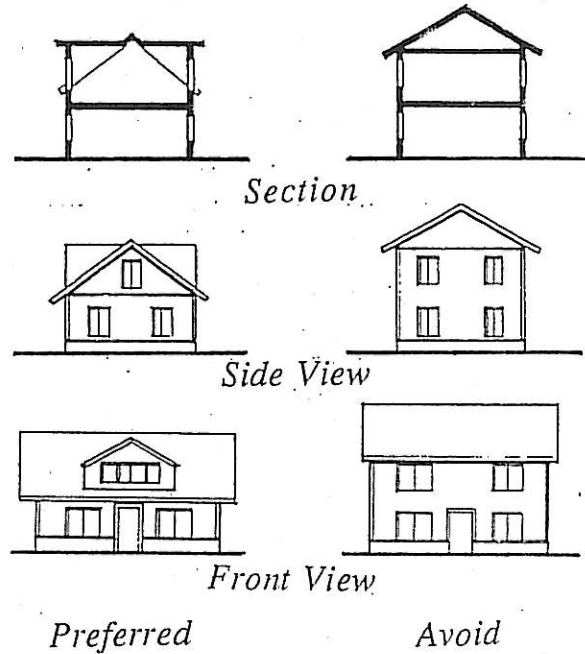
These Guidelines will help a homeowner respect the patterns and scale of the neighborhood while planning an addition that will meet their needs.

Important goals in Small Lot neighborhoods include: minimizing the mass of the house, maximizing privacy, minimizing the impact of the garage, creating a strong street tree pattern, and creating a friendly, neighborhood feel along the street.

GUIDELINES FOR SMALL LOTS

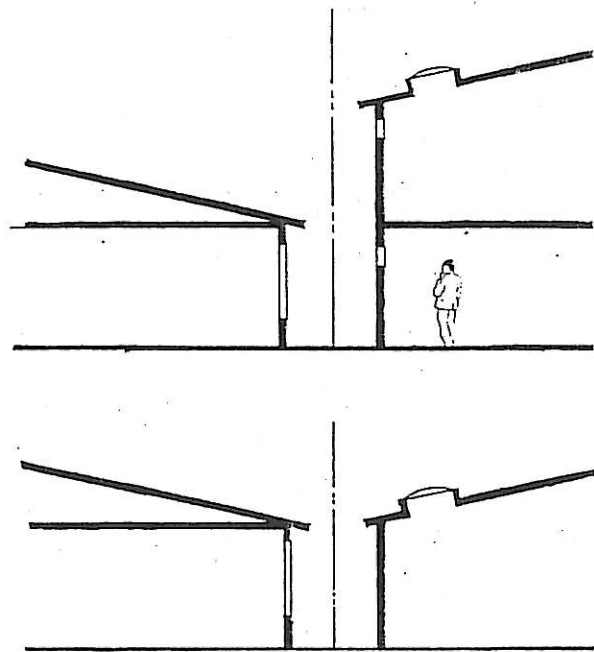
1. MINIMIZE PERCEPTIONS OF BULK AND MASS

The "small cottage" scale of the neighborhood should be maintained. Any new structure should fit in by considering the patterns, proportion, and detailing of the neighborhood. Rooms can exist "within" a roof and have dormers or bay projections. A second story may be stepped back from the street facade to minimize its visual impact. Avoid long expanses of side wall which offer no visual relief. Articulation provides visual interest and can reduce the apparent size of a second story addition. Trim and detailing can also help reduce the apparent size of an addition by creating variations and shadows on an otherwise blank expanse.



2. MAINTAIN PRIVACY BETWEEN NEIGHBORS

Additions to these small homes put pressures on privacy. Every aspect of living is just that much closer to a neighbor. Of special concern on small lots is the view into adjacent homes and yards from the second story, especially along the side yard. Stagger windows and step back from side yards. Place any second story to minimize the impact it has on neighbors. In addition consider using high clerestory windows and skylights. These let in light and air but prevent direct views.

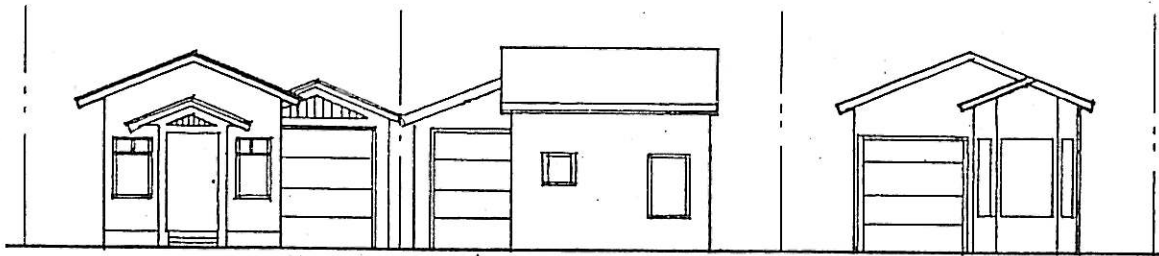


Maintain privacy with high windows or solid walls.

GUIDELINES FOR SMALL LOTS

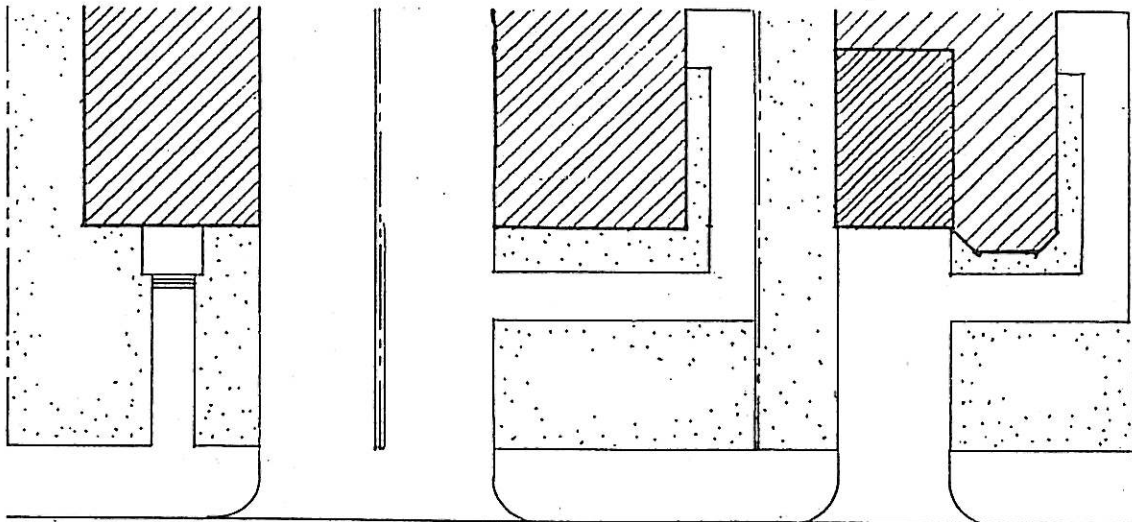
3. ORIENT THE HOUSE TOWARD THE STREET

Do not create a blank or stark wall facing the street. Features such as porches, windows, balconies, or appropriate roof forms should be planned in the front of the house. Each house is part of the neighborhood and contributes to the overall character of that neighborhood. If one house turns its back on the street, the friendly character of a neighborhood may be lost.



Elevation

*This house doesn't
orient to the street*



Plan

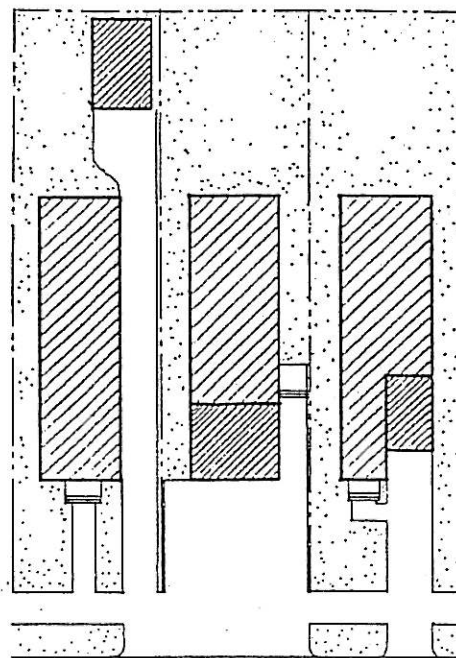
GUIDELINES FOR SMALL LOTS

4. PLACE THE GARAGE BEHIND THE HOUSE

These small cottages were built when cars played a minor role. With such small front yards special care must be exercised to see that the car does not take over. In most cases, it is preferable to place the garage behind the house. If an attached garage is placed on a lot less than 40 feet in width, it should be not more than 10 -12 feet wide.

5. MAXIMIZE LANDSCAPING

Minimize the amount of paving in the front yard and increase landscaping. Small lot neighborhoods run the danger of becoming parking lots and care must be taken to insure a green streetscape. The Zoning Code allows no more than 50% of the front yard to be paved. On a Small Lot, even this may appear to be too much paving.



Better Avoid Better
*Minimize pavement and
the impact of the garage*

Section VI References

REFERENCE

SOURCE

Zoning Code

Planning Department

Curbcuts and Street Trees

Department of Public Works
Standard Provisions

County Tax Assessor
Parcel Maps

Department of Public Works
Planning Department

Fence Handout

Planning Department

Setback and FAR Requirements

Planning Department

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